A SEASONABLE DISCOURSE AGAINST COMPREHENSION.

Occasioned by a late

PAMPHLET

Intituled The

Peaceable Design,

Being a Modest Account of the *Non-Conformists Meetings*, with some of their Reasons for *Non-conformity*: And the way of Accommodation in the Matter of *Religion*. Humbly proposed to Publick Consideration by some Ministers of *London*, against the Sitting of Parliament, in the Year, 1675.

Titus 1. 13.

Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the Faith.

LONDON,
Printed in the Year, 1676.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

A Discourse against Comprehension.

'TIs an amazing *Reflection* (but that nothing seems strange in these last and worst of Days) that Persons otherwise of undoubted *Loyalty*, should so far be a Contradiction to themselves and their former *Actions*, as out of a vain compliance with some People, and thereby to obtain the Title of *Moderate Men*, to be encouragers of those Designs, which, if duely prosecuted according to some Mens intentions, are inevitably destructive both to *Church* and *State*.

That there should be *Ambitious*, *Covetous*, *Discontented Persons*, who having flourished under the late *Rebellion*, do endeavour to repeat it, is no wonder. But that any of those Loyal *Sufferers*, who have sufficiently smarted under the *late Troubles*, that those should so tamely contribute to their *own* and

the Churche's ruine, is not so easily understood.

That the *N. C.* have formerly found Friends and Favourites amongst some *Privy-Counsellors*, and others of the *Nobility*, is easily granted. (And therefore the Author of *Good-Will amongst Protestants*, who so boastingly urgeth this Topick, might if he pleas'd, have kept his *Quotations* in his *Common-Place-Book*). *Pag.* 2.

The generous dispositon of those noble Spirits, naturally Compassionate towards all suffering Parties, and the great comparative *Meekness* and *Innocency* that appear'd in those first *Dissenters*, are a ready *Apology* for the *Indulgence* that was then shewed them. But now since *by their Fruits we do know them*: Since their *Principles* are explain'd into such dismal *Practices* (of which it were a happy thing if the sad experience of these Kingdoms would suffer us to be ignorant) the Loyal *Nobility* and *Gentry*, much less the *Clergy*, have little cause to be fond of these People, who are still disturbing

Lest

Authority with their impertinent, I pray God they do not prove destructive, Clamours.

That this may not be rejected as the melancholy reflexion of a discontented Brain, I shall consider the intended Relaxation with all imaginable strictness.

The Matter of *Fact* is this.

The *Non Conformists* have mov'd, that *two* Declarations in the Act of *Uniformity*, may be dispensed with. They are these,

I *A. B.* do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent to all, and every thing contained, and prescribed in, and by the Book, Intituled, **The Book of Common-Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the**

Church, according to the use of the Church of England; together with the Psalter or Psalmes of David, pointed as they are to be Sung or Said in Churches; and the form or manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

I *A. B.* do declare, that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King; and that I do abhor that Traiterous Position of taking Arms by his Authority against his Person, or against those that are Commissionated by him; and that I will Conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, as it is

is now by Law eſtabliſhed. And I do declare that I do hold, there lies no Obligation upon me, or any other Perſon from the Oath, commonly called the **Solemn League and Covenant** to endeavour any Change or Alteration of Government, either in **Church** or **State**; and that the ſame was in it ſelf an **unlawful** Oath, and impoſed upon the **Subjects** of this Realm, againſt the known Laws and Liberties of this **Kingdom.**

What *Private* deſigns are hereby promoting, we muſt leave to Almighty God and the Event of things: But as to the *Publick*, there can be no warrantable Reaſon for ſuch *Diſpenſation*; but either the *unlawfulneſs* or inexpediency of theſe *Declarations*.

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The *unlawfulness* of them will never be pretended by any true *Son* of *the Church of England*. For this were in short to give up the whole Cause; and to lay the charge of *Schism* at our own Doors. Because, *that* Church which requires any thing *unlawful*, as a condition of her Communion, is doubtless *Schismatical*.

But since those *Laws* and *Constitutions*, which were at first Legally establish'd, may by the alteration of Circumstances, be very burdensome to the *Subject*, and as such ought to be *Repealed*; let us consider the justness of their pretences herein. And if upon inquiry it do appear, that the continuance of these *Declarations* is as necessary for the preservation both of *Church* and *State* as their first enforcement; I do then humbly petition *Authority* to consider the excellent words of this present * *Parliament*.

It will no way become the Gravity or Wisdom of a Parliament, to pass a Law at

*Votes of the House of Commons, *Feb.* 5. 1662. against Indulgence.

at one Session for Uniformity, and at the next Session (the Reasons of Uniformity continuing still the same) to pass another Law to frustrate or weaken the Execution of it.

It will expose your Majesty to the restless importunity of every Sect or Opinion, and of every single Person also, who shall presume to dissent from the Church of England.

As to these *Declarations*; the *Assent* and *Consent* in the former, and the *Renunciation* of the *Covenant* in the later, are thus rationally grounded.

The end and design of Government is, *Salus Publica*; it is to take care, *Ne quid detrimenti capiat communitas:* Or in the Apostles phrase, *That we may live a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.* For the obtaining of which happy end, his *Sacred Majesty*, who is *Custos utriusque Tabulæ*, out of a due care of his People, by the advice of his *Council*, hath Enacted: That no Man be admitted into any Office *Sacred* or *Secular*, who, when his *Place* requires it, refuseth by *Oaths*, *Sub-*

Subſcriptions, *or Declarations*, to give aſſurance to the *Publick*, that he is *Orthodox* and *Peaceable*.

Now ſince different Opinions and Practices in matters of Religion (eſpecially when cheriſhed and indulg'd) do naturally improve into contentious *Diſputes*; and thoſe Diſputes, if not reſtrain'd, break out into Civil Wars. For, * *Men will at laſt take up Swords and Spears inſtead of Pens; and defend by Arms what they cannot do by Arguments.* Since things are thus; 'Tis at leaſt Prudence, if not Duty, in the Supreme Power, to remove the occaſion of this Ruine, by enjoyning the Publick practice of theſe Duties in one Uniform way; that all his Subjects *may ſpeak the ſame thing*; and *that there be no Diviſions amongſt them, perfectly joyn'd together in the ſame Mind and in the ſame Judgment.*

* Mr. *Newcomes* Serm. before Parl. *Sept.* 12. 1644. *pag.* 36.

And therefore the Act for *Uniformity* moſt prudently enjoyneth, That no Man be permitted the publick Exerciſe of his Miniſtry, till in this firſt

Decla-

Declaration, he hath given his unfeigned Assent and Consent to the *use* of all and every thing in the said Book contained and prescribed: I say *unfeigned*; Hypocrisie being hateful both to *God* and *Man*, and destructive to humane Society.

As to the other *Declaration* in brief thus.

It being notoriously known with what design the *Covenant* was first Imposed; even the ruine of that *Government* which the *Kings* of *England* in their *Coronation-Oath* do swear to Maintain: And the sad Effects being as Obvious, to which that League was in a great measure Instrumental; Authority could do no less, without being wanting to its own Preservation, than to require an assurance from all Persons to be admitted into the *Ministry*; that there lies no Obligation from this Oath, *to endeavour any Alteration of Government either in Church or State.* In which words whoever refuseth to de-

declare doth in effect assure us; That though at present restrained, yet he is still obliged, when occasion shall offer it self, in his Place and Calling to root out *Popery*, *Prelacy*, i. e. *Government by Arch Bishops*, *Bishops*, *Deans*, *Chapters*, &c.

If it be *replied*, That there is no Alteration of Government intended by these moderate Dissenters, whose Comprehension is desir'd; but that it is another Clause in the *Declaration*, which justifieth their refusal, *viz. There lies no Obligation on me or any other Person*, &c. Which, say they, cannot safely be declar'd, because, though they do not approve the whole *Oath*; yet there are several indispensable Duties contained in it, which can never be *renounced*.

To this I *Answer*:

The *Alcoran*, *Romish Breviary*, or *Missal*, may by any one that hath subscrib'd them be lawfully renounced; and yet doubtless there are in them several Duties of Morality, whereto he was obliged before, and to which he was fur-

further obliged by his own Personal act in subscribing, as being a part thereof. Yet may he renounce *In hâc formâ*. And so it is with the *Covenant*; which may in like manner be renounc'd, notwithstanding those good things that are contained in it. The reason is, Because *Subscription* was to the *Totum complexum*, i. e. to the whole Frame of the *Covenant* as such; and therefore the *Abrenunciation* of it must be to the whole as such: The Obligation whereof being renounc'd, must reach to every Branch and Clause therein; so as no Man standeth obliged to the performance of any one Branch thereof (though otherwise not only lawful, but even necessary upon some other account) as it is a Branch of the Covenant.

As to that trifling Scruple; That though *they themselves* are not obliged by it, yet it is too much confidence to declare; *There lies no Obligation on any other*: This, I say, scarce deserves Confutation. For, since *Nemo tenetur ad impossibile*, and *Juramentum non est vinculum iniquitatis*; if it be *in it*

self

ſelf an unlawful Oath (as hath upon occaſion been ſufficiently prov'd) it can neither oblige *them*, nor *any other* whatſoever, to any thing but Repentance.

But the moſt plauſible *Pretence* in behalf of theſe *Diſſenters* (and which it ſeems hath influenc'd ſome loyal Noble Breaſts) is this.

The Union of *Proteſtants* in his Majeſties Kingdom's, is a very bleſſed and deſirable Work; and accordingly it is the Duty of every good *Subject*, in his Place and Calling, faithfully to promote it: This being the moſt effectual Method to ſuppreſs the common Enemy the *Papiſts*; who are doubtleſs more encourag'd by our *Diviſions*, than any other Motives or Endeavours of their own *Party*. And therefore were there but ſome little *Relaxation* granted, whereby the moſt eminent *Presbyterians* might be receiv'd into the *Church*; What a conſternation would this ſtrike into the *Papal Faction*? What ſignal Service might the *Church of England* receive from theſe famous Champions,

whoſe

whoſe Zeal and Learning are ſo notorious to the World?

This is their *Plea:* The weakneſs of which may thus eaſily appear.

The *Union of Proteſtants, Reformation of abuſes of Religion,* with ſuch like ſpecious Names, being the uſual Vizards wherewith Men of inſatiable *Avarice* or *Ambition* diſguiſe their baſe unworthy Intentions, that the uglineſs thereof may not appear to vulgar Eyes: It concerns *Authority* to be very deliberate in their *Councels*, and not be too forward, upon every ſlight pretence, to innovate good *Laws*, for the ſad conſequents of which Change they can never be anſwerable to *Church* and *State.*

Few are of ſo weak Capacity, but publick evils they eaſily eſpie; fewer ſo patient, as not to complain, when the grievous inconveniences thereof work ſenſible Smart, ſaith judicious Mr. *Hooker.* Hence it is that the very name of *Reformation* carrieth with it a great deal of outward Glory and Luſtre, filling the Hearts of Men with expectation

of

of much Happiness to ensue, and in that Hope is evermore entertain'd with general Applause, especially of the *Vulgar sort*: And therefore *Covetous, Ambitious, Disconted* Persons, have always improv'd this Inclination to their own advantage. So that seldome hath any *Sacrilegious or Seditious* attempt appear'd abroad in the World, and been countenanced either by the *Great ones*, or the *Many*, which hath not been usher'd in by this piece of *Hypocrisie*; although upon the *Post-fact* we have sadly experienc'd; that the pretence of a *thorough Reformation* serveth as a Foil to set off the blackest Crimes that ever the Christian World was guilty of.

This general Consideration first premised (and 'tis no unseasonable Reflection) to the present Proposal, I thus

Answer:

That the Union of Protestants is indeed a very blessed and desireable Work, as being the most effectual Me-

Method to ſuppreſs the common Enemy the *Papiſt*; and accordingly that it is the Duty of every good Subject in his Place and Calling faithfully to promote it. Thus far is eaſily granted. But then whether this *Comprehenſion* be ſo ſuitable a method to promote that bleſſed Work; or whether theſe *Presbyterians* would be ſo conſiderable a ſupport to the *Proteſtant Cauſe*, were the Walls of the *Church*, like thoſe of *Troy*, pull'd down to receive them, may beſt be judg'd by their own *Confeſſion*. For now they begin to ſpeak plain. The Mask of *Hypocriſie* by long wearing is grown ſo *thin* and *uſeleſs*, that it is fit for nothing but to be *thrown by*. That which ſo falſly and invidiouſly hath been objected againſt the *Prelates*, is too ſadly true of theſe Presbyterians, *They have a Pope in their Belly*.

This, you'll ſay, is a very harſh and uncharitable Reflection: And I do acknowledg the *Charge*, were I not able thus to prove it.

In this very Pamphlet, call'd *The Peaceable Deſign*, p. 71, I find theſe words.

Such a Toleration only is desir'd, as is consistent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and *the Government of the Nation.*

But what shall we say then to the Papists, which is the Objection hit still in their Teeth, that plead for Moderation? Why, we will not baulk the delivery of our Opinion.

There are two parts we profess of that favour or condescention we seek from the higher Powers: The one consisting of a Composition *with those, whose Principles are fit and capable of it: And the other consisting of* Forbearance *towards those, whose Principles will allow them no more. The Papist in our account is but one sort of Recusants, and the conscientious and peaceable among them must be held in the same Predicament with those among our selves, that likewise refuse to come to Common Prayer.* And a little after—— *But as for the Common Papist, who lives innocently in his way, he is to us as other Separatists, and so comes under the like* Toleration.

From

From whence I thus Argue.

Thoſe who affirm Popery to be conſiſtent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and the Government of the Nation, theſe are no faithful Friends to the Proteſtant Cauſe.

But *theſe Presbyterians, who deſire this Comprehenſion, they affirm Popery to be conſiſtent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and the Government of the Nation.*

Therefore, *theſe Presbyterians who deſire this Comprehenſion, they are no faithful Friends to the Proteſtant Cauſe.*

The *Major* I think cannot be deny'd. For, the *Articles* of our Faith being deſignedly Eſtabliſh'd by our firſt *Reformers*, in oppoſition to *Popery* (moſt of the *Popiſh* Tenets being condemn'd therein) thoſe who affirm *Popery* to be conſiſtent with *them*, are Betrayers of the *Reformation*.

The *Minor* is thus proved.

Those who admit a Toleration of Popery, and yet at the same time profess; That such a Toleration only is desir'd, as is consistent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and the Government of the Nation; those affirm Popery to be consistent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and the Government of the Nation.

But these Presbyterians *who desire this Comprehension, they admit a Toleration of Popery; And yet at the same time profess that such a Toleration only is desir'd as is consistent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and the Government of the Nation.*

Therefore these Presbyterians, who desire this Comprehension, they affirm Popery to be consistent with the Articles of Faith, a good Life, and the Government of the Nation.

The *Major* is clear and unquestionable, as likewise the *Minor*, which is thus prov'd from their own words.

That they admit of a *Toleration* of *Pope-*

Popery, is plain from the fore-cited Expressions, *viz.* * *As for the common Papist, who lives innocently in his way, he is to us as other Separatists, and so comes under the like Toleration.* Peaceable Design. *pag.* 72.

That such a Toleration only is desired, as is consistent with the *Articles of Faith*, a *good Life*, and *the Government of the Nation* (the latter part of the *Minor*) these are the very words of the *Pamphlet*.

This acknowledg'd agreement betwixt *Popery* and *Presbytery*, doth deservedly require some further Reflexions, which I shall give my *Reader* in the words of a most *Learned*, and (if I am not misinform'd) *Right Honourable* Person; by transcribing part of his *Letter*; the *Title* of which is as followeth.

A Let-

A

LETTER

Sent from beyond the

SEAS

To one of the

CHIEF MINISTERS OF THE Non-Conforming PARTY

By way of Reply to many Particulars, which he sent to the Author in a Letter of News.

Useful for these Distempered Times.

By a Lover of the Establish'd Government both of Church and State.

Anno. Dom. M. DC. LXXIV.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

A Letter ſent from beyond the Seas, to one of the Chief Miniſters of the Non-conforming Party, &c.

I Cannot but freely confeſs, that I am ſince my Travels become ten times a greater lover of our *own* Church, and as many times a greater Hater and Deteſter of the *Romiſh* Church, than I was before.

And therefore I cannot here diſſemble the hearty grief I have conceiv'd, for the great hopes you have, that the *Licenſes* (as you expreſs it) will be once more Authoriz'd by his *Majeſty*, or the *Declaration* reviv'd.

For as it is that which at firſt was hammer'd out by that late Patron and Idol of the *Presbyterians*, the *Popiſh* Lord *Clifford*; ſo 'tis that which the Roman Catholicks here (eſpecially the Prieſts) do hope and wiſh for as well as you.

They deſire nothing more than ſuch

a *Toleration* as that was, knowing that it muſt needs tend to the ruine of the Church of *England*, which is the principal *Butt* of all their Envy and Malice; as being the main Support and Credit of the Reformed Religion every where, and the only Hedg againſt *Popery* it ſelf in our unfortunate *Britiſh Iſles*.

We meet with not a few *Prieſts* of ſeveral Orders, that have the confidence (in our moſt familiar Conferences) to tell us; that by the juſt Judgment of God upon our *Church*, the time of her Ruine is at hand: The Nation it ſelf being over-ſpread with Schiſm and Atheiſm, and the Hearts of the Faithful being diſpoſed by the Spirit and Providence of God to reembrace the holy *Catholick Truth*. And therefore they freely confeſs, that this time of Diſtraction is their Harveſt; and withal expreſs their Intentions and Zeal to tranſport themſelves into *England* at the Critical time of Toleration, that they may be Fellow-Labourers with your ſelves in that Harveſt.

veſt. They ſeem to Lament as much, and Complain as faſt, of the prodigious increaſe of Schiſm and Atheiſm among us, as you are wont to do of the daily growth of *Atheiſm* and *Popery*.

And whilſt you both complain alike, and in the formality of your complaints both alike reflect upon the Church of *England*; it is *She* only that is the Sufferer, and *She* only that truly laments the Growth, and at the ſame time ſets up Banks to hinder the perfect Inundation of all the three among us.

As for *Schiſm* among *Proteſtants*, you were the firſt Fathers, and continue the chief Fautors thereof; all the inferior *Sects* having ſprung from *you*, and dividing both from *you*, and one another, under pretence of the ſame Reaſons, for which you profeſs to divide from the *Church*. And 'tis from *you*, that even the *Quakering* Sect it ſelf (the Dregs of *Schiſm*) have learn'd to talk of *Illumination*, and the *Spirit*. And therefore if you be not *Schiſmaticks*, then

then the Church of *England*, from which you ſeparate, and out of which you have gathered *Congregations*, and Preach and Adminiſter the *Sacraments* unto them; I ſay, if you be not *Schiſmaticks*, then our *Church* muſt be the Schiſmatick in the Controverſie between us; and be juſtly chargeable with the ſame Indictment, which She hath drawn up againſt the *Church of Rome*. An Aſſertion, *Coſin*, which I never knew any other Perſon, except one or two, beſides your ſelf, have the confidence to aver: And an Aſſertion which no Proteſtant here in *France* could hear us yet relate without Horror, Impatience and Diſdain. And therefore, if the Reformed Church of *England*, (from which you wilfully divide, and to which by your Diviſions, you cauſe ſo much Scandal abroad, and Evil at home) be not a Schiſmatical Church, that is, a Church which requires ſome *ſinful Conditions* of *Communion*; in what a woful Condition will your unpeaceable Seditious Spirits appear before the *God of Peace*? And how will you an-

anſwer that at the *Tribunal* of his Wiſdom and Juſtice, which neither your *Fathers*, nor *you* could ever yet anſwer to thoſe Inſtruments of his *Glory*, Judicious *Hooker*, and the Venerable *Sanderſon*?

But whether you are *Schiſmaticks*, or whether you are not, the *Separations*, which you and your Brood have made from the *Church*, are the apparent Cauſes of the growth of *Popery*; and both your *Separations* and your Superſtitious Enthuſiaſtical way of Worſhipping *that God* whoſe People you emphatically pretend to be) are the true Cauſes of that abundant *Atheiſm*, which at preſent makes *England* an Aſtoniſhment, and a Scandal to Foreign *Nations*.

But beſides the *Schiſm* and *Enthuſiaſm*; the *Bloody Wars*, which you formerly made in the *State*, under pretence of the *Glory of God*, and the Reformation of the *Reformed Religion*, have given many Inconſiderate Men occaſion to ſuſpect, that all *Religion*, like that of moſt of your Leaders, is but a Politick Engine, which Men uſe, to make

make themſelves Popular and Powerful; that they may afterwards act with good Colour whatſoever their Intereſt ſhall ſuggeſt.

And furthermore to conſider; That the great pretenders of the *Spirit*, and power of the Chriſtian Religion (which with reſpect to Magiſtrates teacheth nothing but to *Obey* or *Suffer*) ſhould notwithſtanding Preach up *Rebellion* againſt their Lawful *Prince*; Fight him from Field to Field; remove him from Priſon to Priſon, and at laſt moſt Barbarouſly put him to Death; is ſuch an abſurdity againſt the Principles of right *Reaſon*; ſo repugnant to the Laws of our own Nation, and ſo inconſiſtent with the Peaceable Doctrine of the *Goſpel*; that beſides the *Atheiſts* it hath made, it hath, and ever will conſtrain Men of honeſt *Principles* and juſt *Reſentments*, to Perſecute you with *Satyrs* and *Exclamations* to the end of the *World*.

I am confident, I do not unjuſtly charge you in any particular, eſpecially with the *Murther* of the *King*. For there were no Acceſſaries in the Mur-

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ther of that *ſacred Perſon*; neither was it the laſt ſtroke only that fell'd the Royal Oak; but *you* and the *Independants*, like the two Sacrilegious Prieſts of *Jupiter*, are equally guilty of the *Crime*; the one for binding the direful *Victim*, and the other for putting the Knife to his *Throat*.

But to be ſhort; where I am ſo unacceptable, I'le conclude my *Argument* with a *Fable*. A principal Ship, which for many years had been *Sovereign* of the Seas, was at laſt Attaqued by a Tempeſtuous Wind, which the *Devil* raiſed, and notwithſtanding all the help that could be made to ſave her, was driven by the force of that malignant *Wind*, and ſplit upon a *Rock*. The very ſame inſtant ſhe daſhed upon the Rock, the Wind ceaſed; and being afterwards curſed by the Sea-Men, for the Wrack of the *Royal Charles* (for ſo the Capital Veſſel was called) anſwered: You charge me moſt unjuſtly, my Friends; it was not I, but the *Rock*, as you ſaw, that ſplit your *Ship*,

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The *Moral* of this Parable is very obvious; and if the *Application* thereof, or any thing elſe that I have written, may conduce to awaken your *Conſcience*, and reclaim you from *Schiſm*, I ſhall think my pains well beſtowed. But if *you* and your Seditious *Brethren* will ſtill perſevere to aſſault the *Church* on one hand, as faſt as the *Romiſh Prieſts* do undermine Her on the other, Her day's are like to be but few and evil; and except *God* incline the Heart of our *Magiſtrates* to put the *Laws* in Execution againſt *them*, and find ſome effectual means to reduce *you*, you may live to ſee her Ruine accompliſhed, which you both alike deſire and expect.

How numerous you are, the World can geſs; and if the Accounts, which we receive from the Fathers of *Intelligence*, of ſeveral *Orders*, be credible; there are at leaſt *three Thouſand* of them, which find entertainment and ſucceſs in our *Nation*. But in the mean time, till her hour is come, ſhe ſtrugleth againſt both, like her *Saviour* againſt

the

the *Phariſees*, whoſe true Diſciples in part you both are: *They* repreſenting thoſe ſworn Enemies of the Goſpel, by the *Gabala* of their ridiculous and impious *Traditions*; and you repreſenting them in their *Hypocriſie*, *Pride*, *Envy*, *Evil-ſpeaking*, *moroſs* and *cenſorious Diſpoſitions*, &c. (which are *ſins* ſcarce conſiſtent with *Humanity*, much leſs with *Grace*) as likewiſe in obſerving many *Faſts*, and making long *Prayers*, with deſign not to ſerve *God*, but to delude the *People*. And therefore I wonder not that you are ſuch malignant Enemies to the Church of *England*, ſince that *Phariſaical* ſpirit, which reigneth ſo much amongſt you, is a wicked Puſillanimous ſpirit, that affects to be ſeen in the Head of *Parties*, and Dictate amongſt the *Ignorant*; and loves as much to *Rule*, as it hates to *Obey*.

But would you once be ſo ſincere, as to ſubdue your *Pride*; lay aſide your *Prejudice*; inform your *Ignorance*; and forſake your dearly beloved *Intereſt* for the *Truth*: It would not be long ere we ſhould ſee you joyn with the Church of

England, without troubling our *Senators* to bring you in, with an *Act* of *Comprehenſion*.

Your *Pride* appeareth in Heading of *Parties*, and in the Pleaſure you are ſeen to take in the Multitudes, that run after you; and in your Boaſting, that without *you*, the *Souls* of People would ſtarve for want of *Knowledg*.

Your *Prejudice* is an effect of your *Pride*, and diſcovers it ſelf together with your *Ignorance*, in not ſubmitting to thoſe *Invincible Reaſons* which you cannot *anſwer*.

And as for your *Intereſt*, the greateſt Paradox of all, that is evident enough to me, who have ſo often heard many of you glorifie your ſelves in the *Number* and *Riches* of your *Followers*, boaſt of their Affection to your ſacred Perſons, and brag of the great *Sums* you have Collected in your *Congregations*; which makes the *King's Chappels* (as you Arrogantly call your *Conventicles*) better Places than moſt of the *Churches* of which he is *Patron*. And therefore never complain that you live either

worſe

worſe, or at greater uncertainties than you did before.

For by your pretenſions to *Poverty* and *Sufferings*, and by other unworthy *Arts*, you have ſo wrought your ſelves into the eſteem of your *Diſciples*, that few of them are either ſo *Covetous* or ſo *Poor*, but they will Pinch at Home to ſupply *you*.

There are ſeveral Orders of *Franciſcans* here, who have renounc'd not only *Parſonages*, but all *Temporal Eſtates*, and *Poſſeſſions* whatſoever; and by their Vain-glorious *Sanctity* and *Auſterities*, they have got, like you, ſuch faſt hold on the Souls of the People (which is the faſteſt hold of all) that they can eaſily make moſt of them diſpoſe of their *Children*, Caſhier their *Servants*, and ſettle their *Eſtates* as they pleaſe; and by theſe Tricks do more effectually promote the Intereſt of *Rome*, than all the *Pariſh-Prieſts* within the Pale of that *Church*.

And really, when I conſider what Influence theſe Sanctimonious and Self-denying *Zealots* have o're all Families

in all Places where they live; how they ſteal away the Hearts of the People from their *Pariſh Prieſts*, and Drain their Congregations; and how the deluded People had rather give *them* the worth of a *Shilling*, than the Dues of *Two pence* to their own *Cures*; it makes me often run the Parallel between *you* and *them*, and think; what a Politick and gainful Pretence you have got to renounce your *Livings*, for to ſecure your *Conſciences*, and to *Preach* the *Word* like the *Primitive Apoſtles*; when *God* knows, 'tis not out of Love to the *People*, but to *your ſelves*.

And I proteſt to you, were I a Man to be Maintain'd by the *Pulpit*, and conſulted my *Profit* more than the *Goodneſs of my Cauſe*, I ſhould take the ſame Courſes that you do; I ſhould rather be Mr. *M.* than Dr. *A.* of *Plymouth*; and ſhould chuſe the plentiful Income of that dull Zealot Dr. *Manton*, before that of his moſt Learned and Religious Succeſſor of *Covent-Garden*.

But

But though you Live very well, and better indeed than moſt of the *Miniſters* of the *Church*, yet the Miſchief of it is, you are uncapable of *Dignities*; which makes you ſuch *Aerians*, and upon all occaſions openeth your Throats as wide as *Sepulchres*, againſt the *Biſhops* and the *Church*.

You know what an Hiſtory of *Biſhops* Mr. *Prin* hath wrote, and what a fair Collection the Learned *Smec.* hath taken out of him; as if when a *Biſhop* is defective, either in Piety, Learning, or the Skill of Government, it were not the deplorable Unhappineſs, but the fault of the Church of *England*.

Should an *Heathen*, or *Mahumetan*, make ſuch an Hiſtorical Collection of ſcandalous *Chriſtians*, either in this or former Ages, you would not be perſwaded for all that, to prefer the *Alcoran* before the *Goſpel*, or the moſt exalted *Paganiſm* whatſoever, before the *Chriſtian Religion*.

Therefore Wiſe and Sober Men will make no Inference but this, from ſuch a malicious enumeration of Particulars: That

That *Corruptions* will creep into *Government*, notwithſtanding all the care that can be uſed to the contrary; and that by the favour of *Princes* (who hear with other Mens *Ears*, and often receive undeſerved *Characters* of Men) ſometimes *Ambitious*, ſometimes *Ignorant*, and ſometimes *Slothful*, *Imprudent*, or *Debauched* Perſons, will be prefer'd to the moſt Honourable *Dignities* in the *Church*. But this, as often as it happens, is the Miſery of the *Church* of *England*, which all true *Church-Men* lament; though the Men of the *ſhort Cloak* take all ſuch occaſions to expoſe her to the Scorn of the Common People, who judg by *Senſe* and not by *Reaſon*; and who are taught by *you*, to make no diſtinction between the *Biſhops* and the *Church*.

But were all her *Biſhops* the beſt *Chriſtians*, the beſt *Scholars*, and the beſt *Governours* in the World; and ſhould the *Royal* hand place her *Miters* on the Heads of none but *Jewels*, *Whitgift's*, *Andrew's*, *Hall's*, *Uſher's*, *Morton's*, *Taylor's*, and *Sanderſon's*, yet that Unchriſtian

chriſtian ſpirit of Envy and Diſcontent, which informs the *Non-Conformiſts*, would ſtill flie upon her with open Mouth, like Beaſts upon the *Saints* of old condemn'd to the *Amphitheater*; and make her, as ſhe hath already been for almoſt *Forty* years, a Spectacle to *God*, to *Angels*, and to *Men*.

The wicked Lives of ſcandalous *Biſhops* and *Prieſts*, if there be any ſuch, are her ſad Misfortune, but cannot juſtifie the *Schiſm* you are guilty of; who are bound to hear even *them*, as much as the *Jew's* were bound to hear the *Scribes* and *Phariſes*, thoſe *Hypocrites* that ſate in *Moſes's Chair*.

——If either this, or any thing elſe, a thouſand times better than I am able to Write, may prove effectual to reclaim you from *Schiſm*; I ſhall be as glad, as to ſee ſome other of our Friends reformed from *Drunkenneſs*, *Swearing*, and *Uncleanneſs*: Which are very grievous and dreadful *Sins*, but yet not more damnable in their Nature, nor more deſtructive

ſtructive to the *Chriſtian Religion*, nor more deeply rooted in the Soul of Man, than that of *Schiſm*. From which I pray God by the Power of his Grace to Preſerve me, and Reform you, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; *to whoſe Protection I commit you and reſt*,

Your moſt Affectionate

Saumur, *May*, 7. 1674.

Coſin, and

Humble Servant.

FINIS.